



Tacoma

City of Tacoma

Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group

February 22, 2021

Jane Moore and Gerrit Nyland, Co-Chairs
Tacoma Transportation Commission
747 Market Street, Room 644
Tacoma, WA 98402

RE: Puyallup Avenue Transit/Complete Street Improvement Project

Dear Co-Chairs Moore and Nyland,

On behalf of the Transit-Oriented Development Advisory Group (“TODAG”), I am expressing our support for the City of Tacoma’s effort in accepting the \$2.1 million grant awarded to the City through the Puget Sound Regional Council’s (“PSRC”) competitive regional process to fund the design phase of the Puyallup Avenue Transit/Complete Street Improvement Project (“Project”).

The successful completion of the Project is an integral part of making South Downtown Tacoma a truly multimodal, interconnected, transit-oriented development (TOD) district, and will help capitalize the future investments of Pierce Transit’s Bus Rapid Transit (BRT) and Sound Transit’s Tacoma Dome Link Extension (TDLE) projects.

We understand that by accepting the grant, the City is committed to constructing the Project as originally scoped in the grant application. Through our review and discussion of the Project over the last few months, we believe it is imperative that the Project needs to factor in the community’s interests and concerns and the original scope of work may be subject to modifications accordingly. Therefore, we strongly recommend that the City, upon accepting of the grant, allow adequate flexibility through the design phase of the Project to ensure our concerns and recommendations are addressed to the fullest extent possible. In addition, we offer the following design principles and priorities for the City’s consideration and incorporation into the final design of the Project:

1. **TOD Design Principles** – The Project provides significant opportunities, if designed appropriately, to substantially create TOD Neighborhoods (not just TOD projects). To help realize this vision and expected outcome, we recommend that the design of the Project adhere to the following TOD design principles that we have developed and endorsed and are also using for evaluating the BRT and the TDLE projects:
 - (1) Multimodal Connectivity
 - (2) Economic Development Opportunities
 - (3) Placemaking/Urban Form
 - (4) Social + Cultural Impacts
 - (5) Community Benefit



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- 2. Three Distinct Districts** – Recognize the three distinct character areas along the Puyallup Avenue corridor and apply distinctive, yet compatible design considerations for these areas. As illustrated in the diagram below, the corridor can be generally divided into the following segments:

- Segment 1 – The Neighborhood District between Pacific Avenue and E. C Street
- Segment 2 – The TOD District between E. C Street and E. G Street
- Segment 3 – The Industrial District between E. G Street and Portland Avenue



- 3. Pedestrian Oriented Amenities** – Provide crosswalks and wider sidewalks (at a minimum width of 12 feet, where possible) with appropriate amenities and features, and add attractive street lighting, to ensure a safe, comfortable and friendly walking, shopping, and outdoor dining environment and experience for pedestrians. Implementation of these pedestrian oriented amenities should be prioritized for both Segments 1 and 2, with emphasis on Segment 2 – the TOD District. Further emphasis should also occur around the three intersections at G, D and C streets, as these nodes are at the heart of the Puyallup Avenue corridor, a regional transportation hub, and a gateway to Downtown Tacoma and the Tacoma Dome. Higher pedestrian counts and activity are anticipated in this area, particularly where Puyallup Avenue intersects E. D Street, a designated north-south pedestrian connector between the Tacoma Dome and the Foss Waterway.
- 4. Bicycle Connectivity** – Provide protected, connected bicycle lanes along the entire Puyallup Avenue corridor, to the extent possible.
- 5. Transit Lane** – Designate a Business Access and Transit (BAT) lane on one side of Puyallup Avenue (likely the south side) to accommodate buses, and as appropriate, higher-occupancy vehicles. Recognize that encouraging and growing transit ridership is key to promoting transit-oriented development, augmenting regional high capacity transit services, enhancing mobility benefits for underserved populations traversing the corridor, and reducing tailpipe emissions.
- 6. Traffic Calming** – Apply traffic calming methods and devices, such as narrower traffic lanes, reduced speeds, textured intersections and crosswalks, in the design and traffic operation on the Puyallup Avenue corridor and the adjacent side streets to improve safety for all users. Again, this is especially critical in Segments 1 and 2.

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7. **On-street Parking** – To the extent possible and without sacrificing Item #3 above, accommodate short-term on-street parking, load/unload zones, and on-demand and delivery parking along Puyallup Avenue in front of current businesses in Segments 1 and 2 to protect investments already made in this area. Inclusion of diagonal parking along adjacent side streets is also seen as desirable to ensure no net loss of on-street parking in the immediate area.
8. **Freight Mobility** – Ensure safe and efficient freight mobility and truck maneuverability balancing freight needs with Items #3 – #7 above. Recognize that Puyallup Avenue (between E. D St. and Portland Ave.) is identified in the Transportation Master Plan element of the Comprehensive Plan as a Primary Street within Tacoma’s Freight Priority Network.
9. **Adopted Planning Policies** – Maintain consistency with the South Downtown Subarea Plan and the Transportation Master Plan, to the extent feasible and consistent with the priorities in Items #2 – #8 above.

As the Project moves forward, we anticipate that we will be given an opportunity to further elaborate on the above-mentioned design principles and priorities, and continue to be an active sounding board for the Project. We acknowledge that there may be potential adjustments, tradeoffs, and compromises that will need to be considered and accommodated during the design phase and expect these to be made with the concurrence of the TODAG or any successor group representing the Dome District and the Project area.

The City Council’s Resolution No. 40303 that established the TODAG states that “proposals by the TODAG will be forwarded to and reviewed by the City’s Transportation Commission, for concurrence with adopted transportation and land use plans and policies.” We are hereby forwarding to the Transportation Commission our support for the Project’s grant acceptance and our recommendations on supplemental design considerations. We understand the Commission will forward our recommendations to the City Council.

If you have any questions about this recommendation, please contact TODAG’s staff liaison, Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services Department, at (253) 573-2389 or bboudet@cityoftacoma.org.

Respectfully,



Imad H. Bahbah, RA, SARA
Chair



Donald K. Erickson, AICP
Vice-Chair

- c. Councilmember Robert Thoms, Tacoma City Council, District No. 2
Kurtis Kingsolver, Director, Public Works Department
Mark D’Andrea, Project Manager, Public Works Department
Brian Boudet, Planning Manager, Planning and Development Services Department